

A FAREWEL
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE
BAPTIST MEETING in *Rye*.

On February 8, 1761.

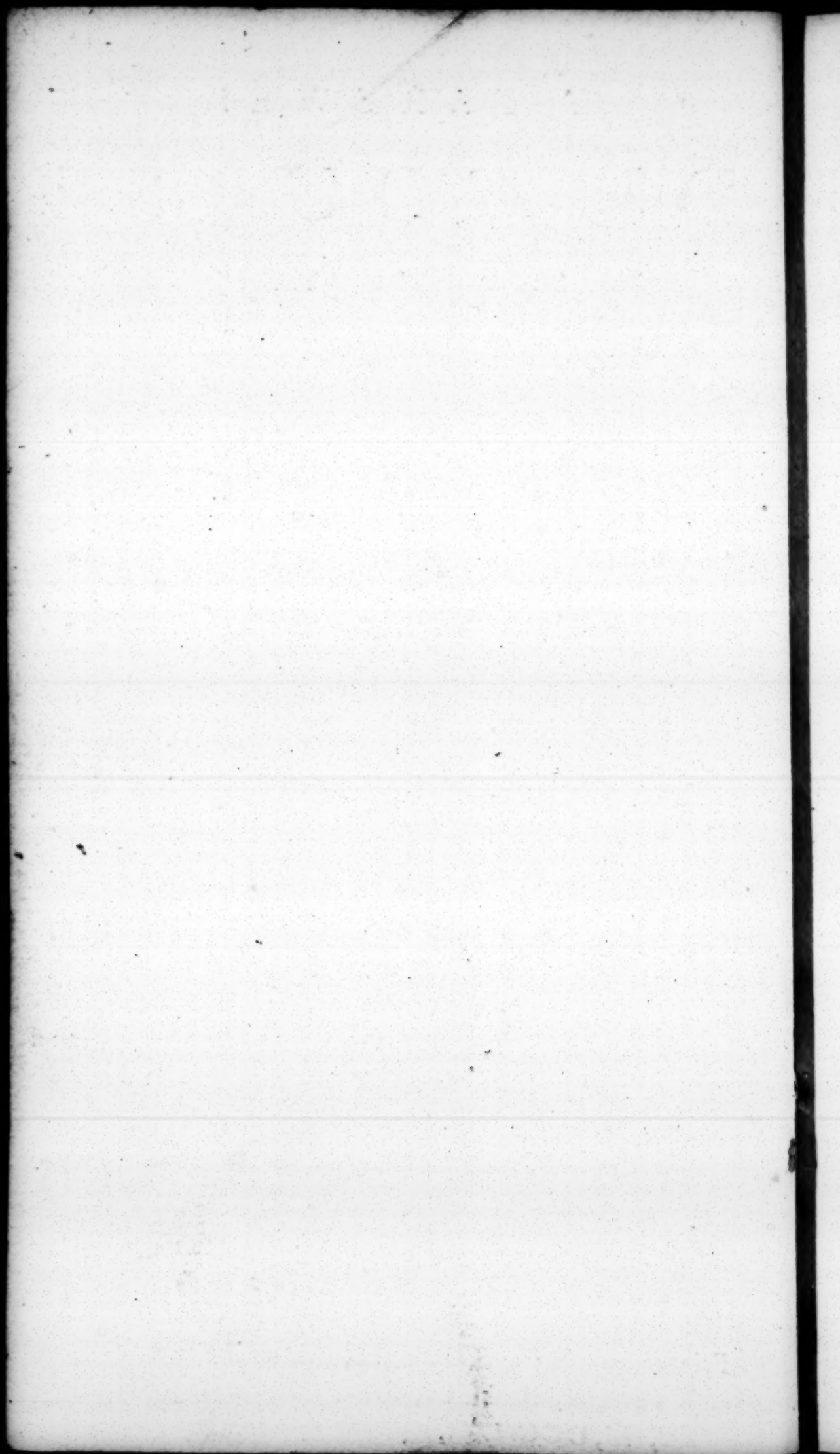
And printed by them that heard it, in testimony of their Affection to their late Minister.

BY THE
Rev. Mr. MORGAN EDWARDS.



DUBLIN:

Printed by and for S. POWELL, Printer in *Crane-lane*, and
J. FISHER, Bookseller, in the *Old Exchange* on *Cork-*
bill, M,DCC,LXI.



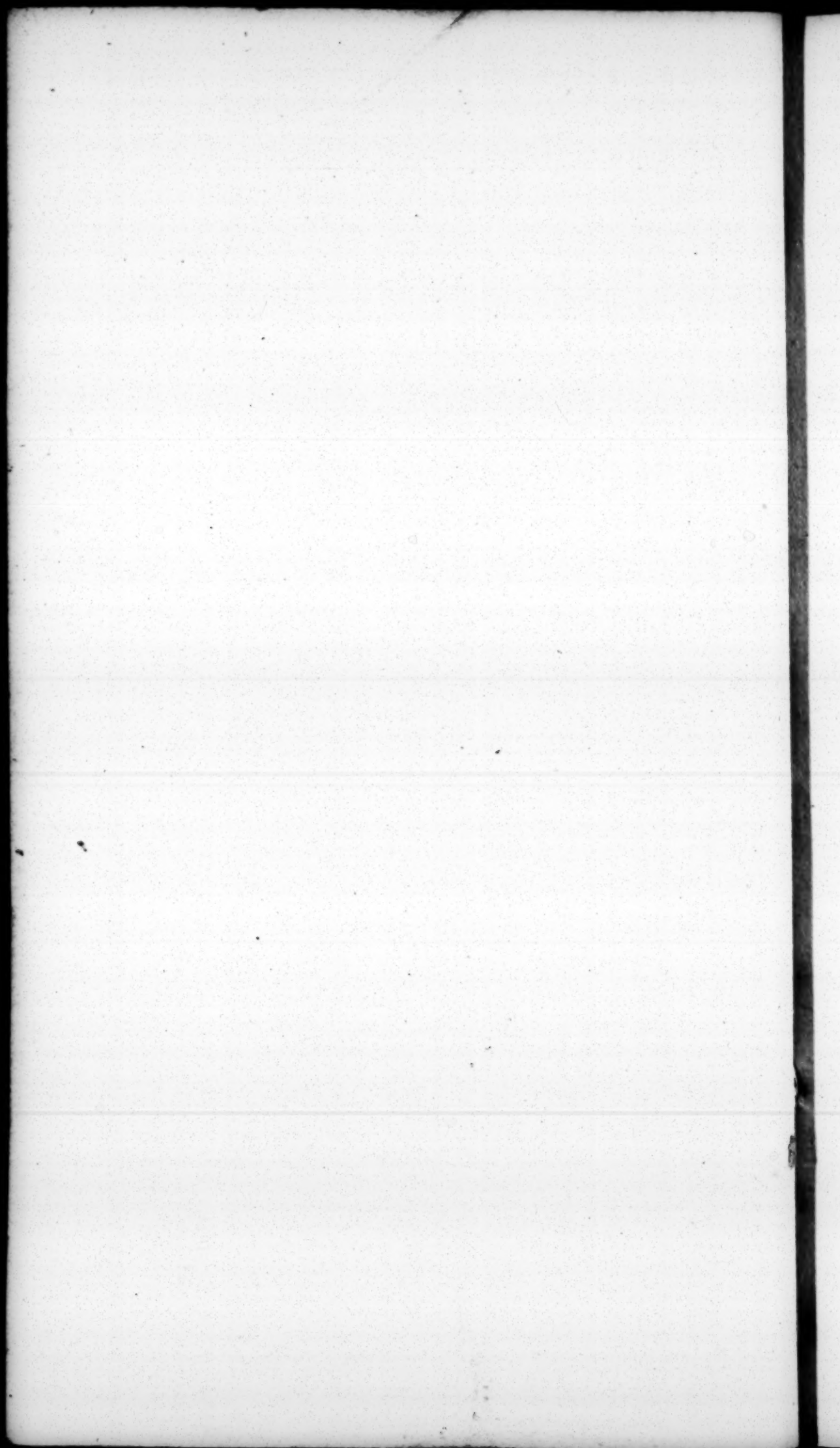


A C T S xx. 25, 26.

And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more : wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.



O R probably shall you ever more see my face, nor I yours ; for the time of my departure is come : and I go a great distance ; and to a habitation far asunder from yours : a distance that forms a great part of the circumference of this huge globe : a habitation as wide from yours, that the Earth itself will interpose between us. Our present parting therefore looks as if it would be (like that of Paul, and his hearers) a parting for-ever. The parting of friends is always afflictive : but parting for ever adds to affliction an uncommon solemnity : in so much that parting with friends at death yields not greater ; sometimes, not so great and solemn afflictions ; for thus they are compared. “ Weep not for the
“ dead, neither bemoan him : but weep sore
“ for him that goeth away ; for he shall re-
“ turn no more, nor see his native country”.





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Jer. xxii. 10. This last indeed was not Paul's case; for at the time he was going to Jerusalem, ver. 22. And yet see how moving the interview, "They all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him: sorrowing most of all for the words that he spake, That they should see his face no more," ver. 37. In the above situation, the hearers must be supposed to be very attentive; for they were to hear Paul's last sermon; and to take of him, the last view: and the preacher also very anxious to say something of the last consequence. But his determination to be in Jerusalem at Pentecost made his time short, and his hurry great: and consequently could not enter on a long detail of doctrines, precepts, exhortations, and warnings. And yet in saying his last he must say much in a little time, and in few words: something that would look like finishing the edifice whose foundation he, as a wise master-builder, had laid. And how does he go about it? it follows, — *I preached the kingdom of God among you: wherefore I take you to record that I am pure from the blood of you all.* An admirable contrivance! For hereby he does, in effect, repeat to them at once all that he had preached among them—And withal, drops a consideration that must need engage their future regard thereto. For

1. What could he propose, or what use could his hearers make of this declaration——*I have preached the kingdom of God among you*——but the referring of them back to all he had preached

ed night and day, in public, and from house to house for the space of three years, ver. 31. ? A recollection thereof in his absence, he plainly demands. And what so proper ; since nothing could be so like Paul's future ministry as calling to mind his past sermons ? It would be a Paul's second preaching to them, as chewing the cud is a second feeding. This was providing a supply for them, when he should finally leave them. And

2. What but securing their future regard to what they heard could he intend, or they infer from the declaration that follows—*I call you to record, that I am pure from your blood ?* An alarming thought ! And therefore a likely expedient to gain his purpose. Blood-guiltiness was in the case ! And where could it fall ? Not on the preacher : for he stood clear of it. Therefore on the hearers, if on any. At such a declaration they could not avoid being startled and alarmed. Could not help seeing the necessity of recollecting and improving what had been inculcated. And that a neglect thereof was to be dreaded as self-murder.

And as we are now circumstanced in some respects like Paul and his hearers at Miletus, it will surely be wise in me ; and I hope profitable to you, to be a humble imitator of him. You know that I have gone among you for a whole year preaching the kingdom of God. And I know that I have purposed, and my conscience tells me I have performed my office in such a manner, as to stand clear of the blood of all
my

my hearers. If so, I have in that respect saved my own soul ; and left you without an excuse : and therefore shall not be afraid to meet you at the day of judgment. But notwithstanding my having so done, yet am I not satisfied. Your escaping this soul-suicide, and acting so as not to want an excuse, are the points that run away with my warmest sollicitude. That any of you should die in his blood at all, is what I dread ; what I deprecate ; what I have exerted my self to prevent ; and what gave me pain, because it was a thing possible. Permit me therefore to repeat the substance of my twelvemonth's ministry among you ; and to intreat your future regard thereto, as a thing which as much concerns your blood to improve, as it did my blood to deliver. And though I cannot do it by such short and masterly hints as our apostle uses, yet would I not therefore decline the attempt.

1. I have told you at sundry times, that your state by nature and practice is sinful : and therefore a lost and undone state. That the law of commandments, which you have broken, condemns you. That the cords of guilt, (like irons on a felon's limbs) tie your hands and feet for the dreadful execution, sum'd up in this word HELL. That incensed justice is ready to finish the business. And that nothing but the thin partition of life separates between you and this direful event. I asked you often, Whether you believe this to be a true state of your case as sinners ? And supposed you have answered me in the affirmative. And I did so in order to enquire, Whether that belief hath

awakened your fears ; and urged you to seek a deliverance ; and would not let you alone till you obtained ? If not, your belief concerning you state is but a sham ; and convictions of its wretchedness are strangers to you. For to know that a man is losing Heaven, and going fast towards Hell ; and at the same time be easy about the event, are impossible things. Never to have been terrified at your condition is never to have known it to be miserable. Never to have known its misery is never to have concerned yourselves in earnest about a salvation from it. Therefore, my brethren, think of this, when you cannot hear me speak thus.

2. Next to your being lost by sin, I have made it my business to urge and alledge from scripture, that you cannot save yourselves. And tho' in this view of the matter I should seem to have opposed no man, nor to have militated against any opinion ; yet, if I mistake not, the sense of many teachings, and to which the sentiments of too many hearers accord, is, That God hath put us in a salvable state ; and that salvation itself is our work. But as no man will concern himself about salvation till he be convinced he is lost : so will no man depend on the *Saviour of them that are lost*, till he be persuaded he cannot save himself. Therefore I laboured to convince you that you cannot be your own saviours. For admitting that atonement is made for a man's sins, and so justice satisfied ; the threatenings of God verified ; law to have had its

course ; stipulated blessings secured : and righteousness to justify us wrought out, yet are these rather external preparations for salvation, than salvation itself. To *will* a salvation from sin is a *gift*, how willing soever we may be to be saved from the punishments of sin. So is repentance of sin a *gift* ; for that sorrow, and grief, and affliction which men exercise in a prospect of coming evils are not repentance ; but the workings of the natural law of self-preservation, common to all animals. To *believe* every thing (within the sphere of human affairs) that is exhibited with sufficient evidence, is in our power ; but that faith which availeth in the concerns of salvation is also a *gift*. Change our life from evil, to good courses we may : but changing the heart, so as to stand averse to evil ; and kindly affectionate to God and goodness, is an act of divine power. We may have the flesh washed, commonly called *being baptized* ; but washing moral nature (signified thereby) who but Deity can effect ? And if the above things be the gifts and operations of God ; and if we cannot be saved without them, is it not obvious that no man can save himself ? And therefore remember this also, as you probably do the texts that were used in persuading you of such inability in the creature. Then

3. I have preached Christ to you as the Saviour of them that are lost. And that more or less in every sermon, because the drift of every sermon was the salvation of your souls. Did I tell

tell you, you are lost ? It was to shew your need of him. Did I persuade you, you cannot save yourselves ? It was to lead you to him who alone can save you. Did I tell you, you could not make atonement for sins ? It was to gain your regard to him that is the propitiation. Did I urge, that you are defective in divine knowledge ; cannot be justified by your good works ; cannot make yourselves holy ; cannot regain your lost liberty ? It was to point you to him who is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. In a word, Did I tell you in what sense you were nothing, had nothing, could do nothing, and wanted every thing ? It was to shew, That he is ALL to you, has ALL for you, will do ALL in you ; and that you can have neither wish nor want, fear nor desire which will not find satisfaction in him. His nature ; his relations to his people ; his covenant ; his love ; his death ; his mediation ; and his fulness would unavoidably come in whenever the salvation of lost and ruined man was the point laboured at.

4. Have I not again and again preached up the necessity of an inward and habitual fitness for heaven ? the beginning of which is called a *new birth* ; and its process, *conversion*, and *sanctification*. And why did I represent this change as the effect of divine power ; and promoted by means, but in order to fix your dependence on the divine being ; and gain your application to the means of grace ? And why did I plead the necessity of it ? but because the

nature of man, and the nature of God and heaven are such, that man cannot be happy with God, except he be changed from the devilish, to a divine temperament and disposition. To be pardoned ; to be rescued from Hell ; to be justified ; and to go to Heaven, are objects of strong and universal solicitude, while a fitness for Heaven is but little, and seldom thought of. But what would these avail without the other, if they could be separately obtained ? Can a soul that loves sin be happy in a place where no sin is ; no sensual gratifications to be had ? His habitual hankerings after things which he cannot find in Heaven would make him miserable even there. Can a soul that loves not God ; nor delights in holiness be happy with God, and gratified in holy company and employments ? No : they would be a weariness to him ; and a contradiction of all his capacities of happiness, and taste for pleasure. I call to record this day that I have endeavoured to rivet this sentiment in your minds, like a nail in a sure place. Never therefore, O never discontinue your anxieties about a fitness for heaven while you hope to go to Heaven !

5. I have considered some of my audience as sensible, and newly awakened sinners ; who not only cry *wretched men ! Who shall deliver us ?* but who also (on a comparison of the justice and threatnings of God with their own condition), were ready to say, *Who can be saved ?* To them I have shewn the way that God hath fixed upon to bring his sons to glory ; so

as to let them see that God may be just, and true tho' he should rescue sinners from Hell, to which his word, and justice had doomed them; and bring them to heaven, from which both had excluded them. And that was (1) By verifying his threatnings, and satisfying his justice in punishing his Son FOR them, after having first laid their sins on him. And (2) By accounting what his Son suffered and did, as the sufferings and deeds of the sinners themselves, commonly called *imputation of righteousness*: in consequence of which a title to heaven commences. Therefore no contrite sinner needs despair of salvation: nay may be confident of it. How then could a ministry that exhibited such relief to distressed souls, be deemed too harsh and productive of desperation and madness? Unconvinced sinners are too indifferent to be desperate. And they that have received strong convictions, have too solid a relief to admit of despair.

6. I have also supposed in my audience some of the highest class in the school of Christ; who claim a property in the everlasting love of God; and judge all his decrees and promises to stand engaged in their favour; who say, *in the Lord have we righteousness*; and all the privileges and immunities of the children of God are ours. For the sake of these, I have exhibited the scripture characteristics of such a class; that if my audience should stand the tests, their joy might be full: if not, that presumption and false hope might be prevented; the sandy foundation

foundation discovered ; and I escape the error of amusing, instead of edifying them. And herein I took my measures from an Apostle, who cries, *Make your calling and election sure* : and from another, whose language is, *Try and prove yourselves*. And I intreat you to think of this, when you see my face no more.

7. I have when I first came among you placed the religion of Jesus in LOVE : Love to God, and love to man. So that they who have that religion, are loving and lovely. So that where this love is wanting, that religion is wanting. So that all words and works inconsistent with love are irreligious. And I mention this love last also ; because I would have you consider it as the alpha and the omega of christianity.—Thus have I endeavoured to assist you to recollect the principal things you have heard for a twelvemonth past. And I intreat your future regard thereto. And may God help you to improve All !

I must now desist from speaking for God ; and speaking to you in this place. But were I to do that without some acknowledgments of favours from God and man, I should seem to be defective in my duty to both.

1. If any good has been done here this year, we owe God thanks for it. And I hope there has. An unusual gathering of people to this place might at first be owing to curiosity : but the continuance and increase of that gathering must have another cause ; which I hope is the
moving

moving of the Spirit of God on the face of things in this town, and neighbourhood. The seriousness I have observed here, confirms me in that hope. The frequent free-will-offerings that have been made here, argue that the offerers prize what they hear more than their money ; and this argues a taste for piety. The number of these hearers that have been added to the church, infer that God hath given efficacy to means. A number so considerable, as to equal (within one) the number that met in communion, when I first administered the Lord's Supper in this place. And these, persons whose education led them another way. Besides ; breaches have been made up. Varying parties reconciled. And the strong prejudices against us as a community have been happily removed : so that they who hated us have shewn us favours. Surely the last year seems to have been a set time to favour this Zion. Therefore let us now join in chorus with the royal singer, " Not
 " unto me : not unto us : but to thy great
 " name, O Lord, be the glory. Thou hast
 " built the house, else the builders had labour-
 " ed in vain."

2. If public favours from men require public acknowledgments, I can't avoid making them now. When neither you nor I thought of this parting, your satisfaction in me, and kindness to me were manifest ; and I am thankful. Your efforts to raise me a competent salary were such indeed as I had read of, but never saw before : " for I bear you record that
 " to

“ to your power, yea and beyond your power,
 “ you have abounded in liberality this way.”

And when the proposals I received from America were known, I could not but observe the concern; nay the tears they occasioned. The remonstrance you drew up; the messenger you sent with it to the parties concerned; and the methods by which you proposed to augment my income (could I stay) were arguments of the sincerity of your friendship; and of your strong desires for my continuance among you——

And as for the people of the town and neighbourhood, I owe them public thanks, and now desire their acceptance thereof; for their deportment to me has been not only polite, but beneficent. Attempts were made to harass me when I first came here: but because they were LITTLE the mover was suspected, and the design discountenanced by persons who are as far above mean things as they are superior to others by their characters and fortunes. Their soliciting my company at their public entertainments and houses I esteem as marks of respect. The able advice I had, while my family was in imminent danger; the frequent and friendly attendance, though fees were rejected. The supplying me with things necessary towards recovery of health, which were not to be had for money. The use of gentlemens carriages. The desires which some of them expressed for my continuance in town. The proffer which many made of their assistance to render my stay easy, I now acknowledge with all thankfulness.

Nor

Nor am I less thankful to them whose friendship to me would have been more fully known after their death. And the general regret at my departure which wets so many cheeks in this assembly, gives my heart very sensible touches of sympathy——This being the case, you may be sure I leave the town, and this congregation with great reluctance. And I must own, with great fears too, if interest, and not a sense of duty were the swaying motive. But if I am not much deceived in myself, the latter is the cause. I have wanted nothing here. And if the expences of my family have been great this year, God hath found ways to give me more than double the income I expected. The dangers before me are not few. The quitting my native country, friends, and relations (probably) for ever, is grievous. And yet after a mature consideration ; and consulting my honoured friends ; and brethren in the ministry, it appears to me I ought to go. And as I cannot suspect your friendship for me, give me leave to tell you, That I shall esteem this the highest instance of it, viz. To pray God to give me success in my office in the place whither I am going. And as an instance of my friendship for you, receive one word of advice.

3. You have already, by fasting and prayers made applications for a minister to the Head of all churches. When he comes, let me intreat you to make the evidence of his divine mission, and the divine presence with him, the guide of your opinion of him, and behaviour towards him :

him ; for it is not he whom men approve, but whom God commends that is a minister of the Gospel. To oppose, or discourage, or weaken the hands of such a one : to express dissatisfaction and dislike towards him, will be fighting against God ; and declaring, That what pleaseth God, pleaseth not you. And tho' the pretences upon which you will act in this manner may appear fair and plausible, yet all you can conclude is, That they are the temptations of a Devil transformed to an *angel of light*. Therefore I wish you would pay a special regard to the above advice in judging and acting. Else you may act over again the part of the Jews in a lower degree, who disliked, clamoured against, and rejected the Best of Preachers.

4. I must now take my leave of you. Therefore my dear brethren and sisters, Farewel— And you my dear hearers and kind neighbours, Farewel. Though I may see your faces, or you mine no more in this world, yet we may in Heaven. In hope of which, once more, Farewel.—

F I N I S.